

Champions Who Made Sporting History Eventful in 1915

Achievements in Tennis Outstanding Features

Feats of William Johnston in Winning National Championship and Defeating Williams and McLoughlin Leading Sporting Events—Miss Bjurstedt's Clean Sweep.

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This year the V. C. of the sporting world must go to the athletes who wield the tennis racket. Another year has gone into the discard in the world of sport, and as one looks back he can see nothing in the vista of past events to outshine what was done on the tennis courts. To be sure, many records were made here and there in various pastimes, but there was nothing to stand out like the achievements on the courts. What was done with the racket was the most notable thing of the season that has just passed into history. Any sporting Solomon who desires to pass judgment on the greatest feat of 1915 in sport should have more trouble than the original justice who made the award on the baby in the days of Biblical times. There were two things that really stood out in the sporting events of this country. One was accomplished by a woman, the other by a man, and it is a toss-up as to just which was the better.

Possibly the activities of Miss Molla Bjurstedt were the outstanding features of the sporting season which has just gone by. She did something that no one has ever done before. William M. Johnston also accomplished something that looked almost impossible. Still the girl from Norway performed on the courts in a way that will be long remembered.

Another thing that startled those who follow sports was the arrival of another new champion on the courts in the person of William M. Johnston, of California. His victory in the national championships was fully as sensational as that of Miss Bjurstedt in the three events in which she was the winner. Old timers who can go back to the days of Malcolm Whitman and William A. Larned never saw anything better than what this young, slim athlete from the Pacific Coast did. He was not what might be called a rank outsider, but there were few who thought that he would have any sort of a chance against players of the stamp of Maurice McLoughlin, "Dick" Williams or Karl Behr. He was not even thought of as a possible title winner. Early in the season he had been beaten and he had never shown anything that would lend any sound minded person to believe that he would be able to top all the players of the year; yet he did more in winning the national championship than any other title holder ever did. George Wrenn, the president of the association, and one of the top notchers for a good many years, was one of the many to say that Johnston won his championship by surmounting greater obstacles than any other previous title holder.

While some new champions were crowned, several of the good old standbys still kept on the crest of prosperity. For instance, Frank Kramer, the perennial bicycle champion, once more retained his laurels and for the fifteenth time was acclaimed the champion pedal pusher of the country. Then there was Alfredo De Oro at three cushions. Although George Moore won the big tournament in Chicago and William B. Huey later took the title from him, as the year winds up old man De Oro, at fifty-three, is once again the champion and playing better than ever, as evidenced by his making a record for 150 points in his last championship match. William F. Hoppe is another who seems destined to go on forever. He proved the master of all at the balkline billiard game and appears to be in a class by himself. At the present time there is nothing on the horizon that threatens his position. In most of the other sports new champions were crowned, but the old trio, like the brook, go on forever.

AUTOMOBILING.

The outstanding feature of the 1915 automobile contest season has been the remarkable growth of speedway racing and its attendant crop of new records. Starting with De Palma's victory in the International Sweepstakes event at Indianapolis, on May 31, the drivers have established new marks at the principal meets of the country, winding up with an average of 106.3 miles an hour in the Harkness Trophy contest, won by Resta at Sheephead Bay on November 2.

Taking the distance of the contest into consideration probably the best performance of the year was Anderson's feat in winning the 30 mile Astor Cup race at Sheephead Bay on October 9, with an average rate of speed of 102.6 miles an hour.

Earl Cooper was the champion driver of the season, with standings based on a point system. Out of five starts in road contests he won two firsts, one second and finished unplaced twice. On the speedway he took one first, two seconds and two fourths out of six starts. His teammate, Gil Anderson, finished second in the road races, and took one first, one second and one fifth place out of four road starts. In speedway racing he took one first, one second, one third and one sixth place in four starts.

ATHLETICS.

In athletics in the last year the thing that stood out above everything else was the shattering of the one mile record by Norman S. Taber. The feat of the one-time Brown University student looks very good in print, but when one gets right down to the facts of the record, it is not really amount to much and should not have a place on the list of standard marks. Taber made his record under conditions that were cut and dried. He was paced all the way and the time should be counted merely as an exhibition performance. When William G. George set his mark he was running a race and when John Paul Jones did the fastest time on record for an amateur he was running in a regular race. To put Taber's record above Jones' would be an injustice. The Cornell man had to run around a big field when he ran the fastest mile ever by an amateur. Things were not made to order for him as they were for Taber. Just how little Taber's record amounted to was shown later in the year when "Jole" Ray, of the Illinois A.C., defeated the record maker in time that was more than ten seconds slower than the mark that was made to order for Taber.

Because the latter made the remarkable record that has been made at the Stadium there are many persons who think that he stands out as the best athlete of the year. Possibly he does, because he beat him, three times in competition, but Ray, who made his 15-54 in the Western championships and later on beat Taber in the national event, should come in for a lot of commendation.

One of the odd turns of fate in athletics finds the Westerners at the top of the heap. The Olympic Club, of San Francisco, won the honors in the national meet.

AVIATION.

Aviation in this country during the last year suffered no slump. The chief things that attracted attention in the aeronautic world were the distance flights that were accomplished. Oscar A. Drindley did what was probably the best feat of the year when in a Curtiss flying boat he made 254 miles without passenger inside of ten hours. There were twelve entrants in the contest for the Curtiss Marine Flying Trophy, and several of them covered about five hundred miles.

BOXING.

Some may think that the year 1915 was a lean one in fistic annals, but one thing will make it a memorable one and that was the fact that the heavyweight championship once more came back to the white race. When Jess Willard, the big Kansas cowboy, knocked out "Jack" Johnson in the twenty-sixth round at Havana, the white folk throughout the country heaved a sigh of relief. Since Willard won the championship on April 5 he has not stepped into a ring and he is not becoming very popular because of his refusal to box his challengers.

It is doubtful if the championship will ever go out of the keeping of the white in the future. In many States mixed bouts are prohibited, and even if they were not there are few white fighters these days who care to mingle with their darker brethren. As far as Willard is concerned, he has been hailed as the greatest ever. Maybe he is, but it remains to be seen what he will be able to do when he gets against men like Moran and Coffey. Johnson was not anywhere near his old self when he was beaten by Willard. The latter was just lucky enough to be the man who was selected to meet the negro when he was on the downward path. Moran or Coffey might well have done the same thing—in fact, there are several other fighters who might have been a victor over the dusky champion. As things stand now, though, Willard is apparently sure of his crown for some time to come, for the crop of big fighters is nothing to brag about.

There are only two other undisputed titles. "Johnny" Kilbane still clings to his featherweight laurels through the no decision route, and so does "Reddy" Welsh in the lightweight class. "Kid" Williams really lost his bantam championship to John Ertle last September on a foul, but there were some suspicious features about that bout which makes Ertle's claim rather dubious. In the middleweight division it is hard to tell who is the champion. Technically "Al" McCoy is the top notcher, but every one who goes to boxing bouts considers him more or less of a joke. "Mike" Gibbons is probably the best of his weight in America, but "Young" Ahearn also has to be figured in the running.

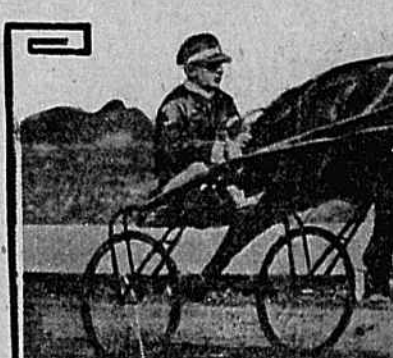
BASEBALL.

Those interested in baseball financially not only lost a lot of money during the last season, but their frivolous actions in the political side of the national pastime caused a blot upon the records which will take more than peace parleys or agreements to erase. Not since baseball was conceived from the boyish game of "rounders" several decades ago has there been so much dirty linen exposed as in the last two seasons, and especially in 1915. That the Federal League, which independently tried to undermine and explode the gigantic organization under control of the National Commission, failed in its mission and was forced to pray for mercy or reason, whichever it might be called, is not only a victory for organized baseball, but for the sport itself, as it tends to clear the atmosphere, which was becoming murky and foul from the incessant contentions hurled back and forth by so-called leaders of the different leagues.

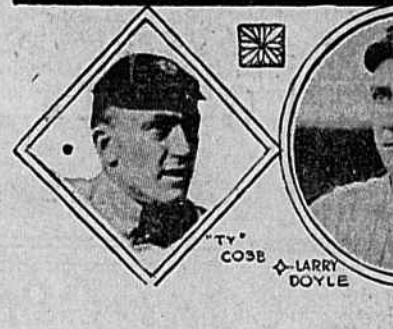
Baseball during 1915 can just as well be stricken from the archives, as the few noteworthy happenings of the year were more than offset by a series of disparaging events which tended to create dissatisfaction among the patrons of the sport. Probably not since the Brother hood war were so many "fans" lost to baseball as was the case last season. Everywhere one hears, "I quit going to the games because I am not interested in court actions and in the owners' walls." Probably peace pacts will lift all baseball fans, but it is certain that several seasons will pass by before the game returns to its rightful favor among "fans."



PETER VOLO



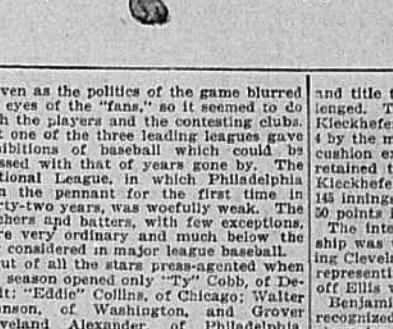
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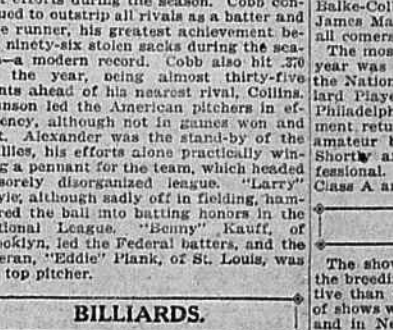
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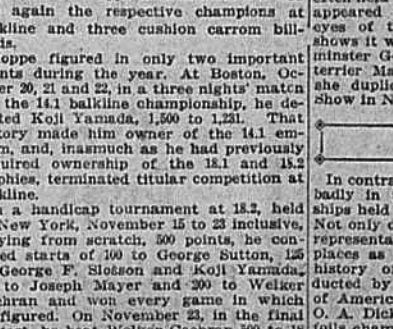
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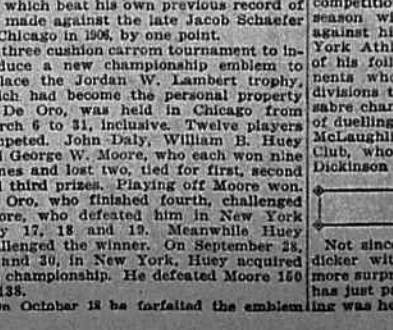
BENNY KAUFF



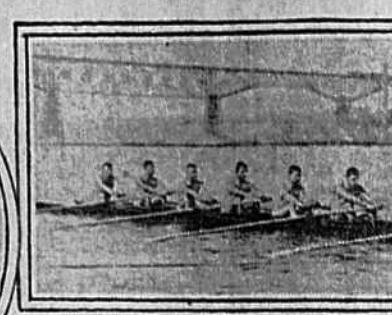
EDWARD PLANK



JOE WOOD



JESS WILLARD



MISS MOLLA BJURSTEDT



JOHNNIE KILBANE



WELSH



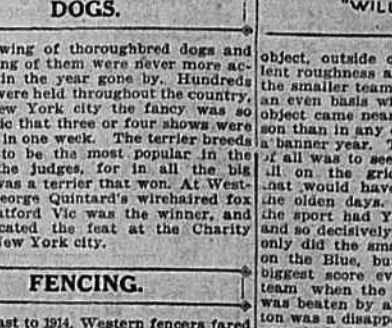
JAY GOULD



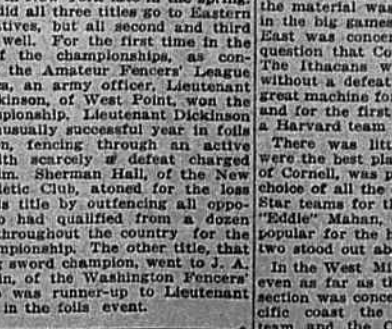
ERIC S. WINSTON



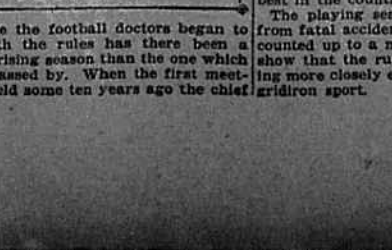
C. C. PELL



ROBERT A. GARDNER



ALMA RICHARDS



CHARLES EVANS, JR.



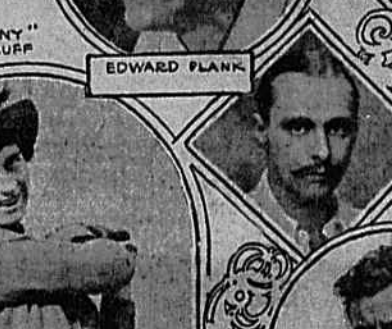
WILLIAM JOHNSTON



WILLIAM B. HUEY



GEORGE MOORE



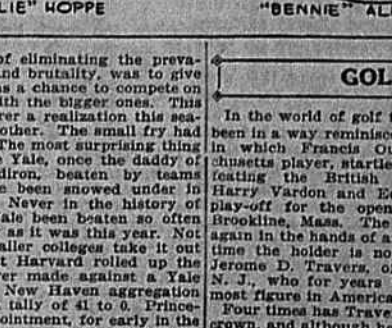
MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN



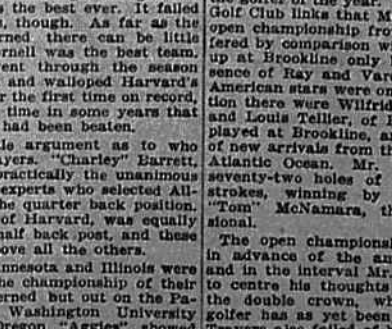
DICK WILLIAMS



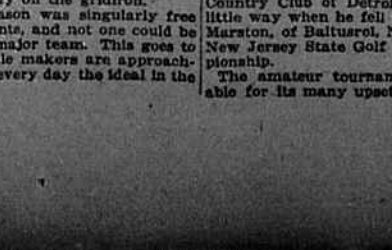
KARL BEHR



FRANK KRAMER



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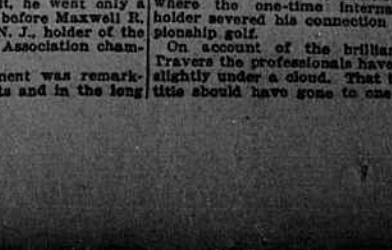
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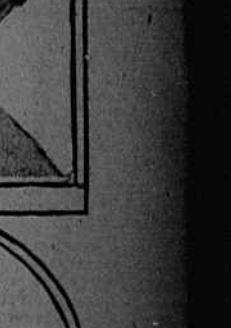
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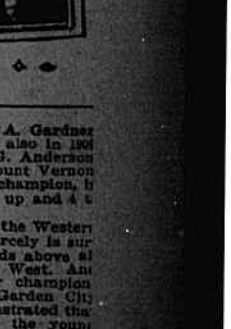
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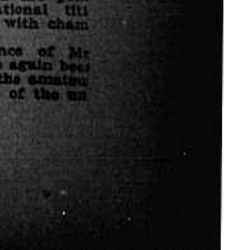
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